

# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for June

*To the dull mind all nature is leaden. To the enlightened mind the whole world sparkles and burns.* ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

The summer season sensually speaks to us of water, fragrance, flowers, fireworks, deck lounging, hammock swinging, sleepovers, swim meets, barbecues, celebrations, camping, concerts, traveling, and eating fresh, fresh, fresh direct from your garden. Whatever you do this June, decide to plant something edible—herbs, vegetables, fruits, or berries. Make iced tea from black currant leaves mixed with fennel, create your unique designer waters with cucumbers, limes, and peaches; delight your guests with a refreshing cold soup of blended melon, mint, and ginger. There is a plethora of abundant varieties to choose from and space is not an issue. Plant, grow, care, harvest, eat, and be healthy. Your enlightened body, mind, and spirit will be grateful to your inner gardener and your world will sparkle and shine.

- **MAKE** your own potting mix by combining equal parts of compost, good soil, and sand. Add leaf mold plus a small amount of liquid fertilizer.
- **GROW** Swiss chard, kale, lettuce, cilantro, parsley, and basil in containers with rollers to provide a quick snip for your supper.
- **WEED** a final time before the hot weather arrives. Weeds suck the moisture from nearby plants.
- **BRING** butterflies to your landscape with lantana, butterfly bush, and sunflowers. Butterflies have sensory receptors on their feet to help them land on their tasty treats rapidly. Go a step further and provide a butterfly dwelling on a perch.
- **POUR** leftover beer in saucers to trap slugs and snails.
- **WATER** lawns and flowerbeds deeply to encourage strong root growth.
- **HARVEST** seeds of perennials like pentstemon, calendula, and poppies to spread in other areas where color is needed.
- **SUCCESSION** planting is the key to a plentiful supply of summer greens including lettuces, arugula, beets, carrots, and radishes. Sow your favorite seeds every three weeks as you consume.
- **PREVENT** fires by removing debris, dead branches, and refuse from around your home and yard.
- **DAZZLE** your summer garden by planting dahlias in full sun with good drainage. You'll enjoy blooms until the first frost.
- **PROVIDE** food, cover, water, and nesting places for birds, butterflies, and bees with nectar-rich plants, host plants, and seed-bearing plants. Your garden can become a popular wildlife destination ensuring a long blooming season. Plant asters, cosmos, amaranth, echinacea, peppers, eggplant, squash, lavender, bee balm, zinnia.
- **PLANT** day lilies (hemerocallis), the main stay of summer gardens for prodigious numbers of flowering stems, heavily loaded with buds, from June to September.
- **GIVE** your children sunflower seeds to plant. The seeds are large and pop out of the ground quickly, delighting the child within us all. Sunflowers are the essence of summer fun.
- **TRIGGER** delightful memories with the seductive powers of afternoon/evening fragrant blooms including Angel trumpets, Nicotiana, four o'clocks, evening stock, summer phlox, and evening primrose. To strengthen the scents, water your garden before sunset.
- **CUT** back leggy perennials and deadhead roses as blooms wither. Save the rose petals to make rose water.
- **PACK** your garden with summer blooming bulbs including gladioli, lilies, and allium.
- **SPREAD** seeds of calendula in your potager or vegetable garden to harvest the flavor of "poor man's saffron." Calendula don't transplant well, thus seeding is best.
- **EAT** organic fruits and vegetables from your garden or farmers' market for a variety of reasons – your own health, the health of the planet, and generally heightened environmental awareness.
- **SHORT** on space? Plant a container garden of fruits and vegetables. Seed companies have developed plants that are compact in size, yield more, taste great, and feature unique colors and shapes.
- **SAVE** the monarchs. Plant milkweed, the butterfly's favorite nectar. P.S. A spectacular 3-D movie about the monarchs' odyssey, *The Flight of the Butterflies*, is now showing in 40 IMAX theaters at museums across the country.
- **SHAKE** the dead leaves from magnolia trees using a sweeping motion with a broom or tall pole. Within days, the large creamy white blossoms explode with pollen attracting the buzzing bees needed for garden pollination.
- **ADD** a taste of the tropics to your landscape with the pineapple guava shrub. It boasts edible pretty magenta and white striped petals topped with fireworks of cranberry feathered pom poms plus later in the year delicious green fruit great for juice or jam.
- **FIRE** up the tiki torches, votives, and fire pits to illuminate the summer gatherings.
- **WATCH** for your plums and apricots to ripen soon. The birds will be the first to your trees so either pick early or net the branches you want to keep.
- **EXPLORE** the world of bee pollinators and create a garden filled with nectar-rich flowers.
- **CONGRATULATIONS** to all our graduates. Encourage them to become green thumbs by gifting a peace lily to keep their dorm room air fresh. (These spathiphyllum are resilient indoor plants that are hard to kill!)
- **THANKS** to all the great men who are shaping the lives of our children with their love and dedication. Happy Father's Day! We lift our rakes to you.

Happy gardening and happy growing to you!

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